

Speaker Biographies



IAN NELLINS

Ian Nellins is Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council and Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, The Environment and Transport. Originally from Northern Ireland, he has lived in Shropshire since moving here with the Royal Irish Regiment in 2007. Since 2017 he has been a member of Market Drayton Town Council and the Chairman of the Royal British Legion (Market Drayton Branch). He became a Shropshire Councillor in May 2021 and was appointed to Cabinet shortly afterwards. His role includes Renewable Energy, EV Charging, Waste and Recycling, Floods, Public Transport and Active Travel. He is also the Council's Armed Forces Champion.



BARONESS BENNETT

Natalie Bennett (or Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle for really formal occasions), became the second Green member of the House of Lords four years ago. Leader of the Party from 2012-2016, she is also a vice president of the Local Government Association and the National Association of Local Government. Her professional life was largely spent as a journalist, finishing as editor of the Guardian Weekly. Her first degree was in agricultural science and she can get very geeky about soils, and fungi. Her first book, Change Everything: How We Can Rethink, Repair and Rebuild Societies, will be out in 2024.



ANDREW MALIPHANT

Andrew is a qualified parish clerk and regeneration manager who has been Environmental and Sustainability Advisor for SLCC since 2022. He is currently NALC's representative on the Government's Local Net Zero Forum. He was parish clerk at Longhope, Gloucestershire for eight years following three years as a parish councillor. Since 2023, Andrew has been chairman of The Place-Based Initiative Ltd, a new venture which has taken over the Great Collaboration website with a view to expanding its coverage of climate and nature recovery actions for town and parish councils working with their communities.



ALLAN WILSON

Since retirement from the Police Force, Alan has been actively involved in his concern for the environment. In 2017 he created a hedgehog preservation organisation. He became a parish councillor 2017 in Edmond and became Chair in 2019. He was vice-chair of the Shropshire Association of Local Councils, holding the portfolio responsibility for climate change matters. In this role he has presented to councils extensively on their responsibilities under the Climate Change Act 2008. Allan co-founded Save Our Shropshire CIO (SOS) in July 2021, a charity dedicated to increasing people's understanding of Climate Change.



SUZANNE WYKES

Suzanne worked in Local Government as an ecologist for 20 years including in Hampshire and Staffordshire, and joined Shropshire Council two years ago. I have experience of habitat creation on public land including ponds, heathland and woodlands as well as advising on their management and securing stewardship. I have previously lead Biodiversity Action planning and also city-scale habitat opportunity work. My career has also involved time spent in the private sector including liaison with many developers on projects such as residential development and HS2.



MANDY THORN

Mandy is the current High Sheriff of Shropshire. She grew up in rural Herefordshire and has lived in Shropshire for almost 30 years. After a graduate management programme in the public sector, she worked for large national companies in London before spending 4 years in Southern Africa, returning to Shropshire where she joined her very small family care business. She has been a member of a number of charity boards and also sat on public private partnership boards, latterly the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Board which she chaired until November 2022.



SIMON COOTER

Senior Reserve manager with nearly 40 years' experience. Currently responsible for the Stiperstones and Downton Gorge National Nature Reserves. Has worked for Natural England and predecessor bodies in Northumberland, Durham, Dorset and Lincolnshire Coast and prior to that for the RSPB on nature reserves from the highlands of Scotland to Somerset.



PETER CARTY

Pete is a Naturalist and Community Volunteer active in several community wildlife groups. He is the new Chair of the Marches Meadow Group. For the last 24 years he was the Countryside Manager for the National Trust in South Shropshire delivering land management for Conservation and Public Access on Trust land from the Welsh border to Kinver in South Staffordshire - approximately 10,000 acres of land across 14 sites. Pete retired in September 2023



LAUREN QUINN

Lauren Quinn is Senior River Ranger within Severn Trent's Water, Quality and Environment department. She has a background in environmental chemistry and monitoring and has 20 years' experience of working in construction, land remediation and water industries. With a passion for the natural environment, her focus is now on supporting others to improve and care for rivers and ensuring that our region's rivers are as healthy as possible.



RICHARD GRINDLE

Richard has been CEO of Shropshire Wildlife Trust since 2020 and has worked for The Wildlife Trusts since 2014. Before that he worked in the overseas NGO sector in various areas including public health, landmine clearance, and behaviour change communication. Whilst not a specialist in ecology or land management he is passionate about nature and the role it can play in addressing local and global problems.